

10 December 1953

OPM 10-310-1  
PERSONNEL DIRECTOR MEMORANDUM NO. 99-53

SUBJECT : Document Classification Categories

REFERENCE: a. Executive Order #10501, Safeguarding Official Information  
in the Interests of the Defense of the United States  
(signed 5 November 1953; effective 15 December 1953)  
b. Agency Notice [REDACTED] (27 November 1953)

25X1A

1. Effective 15 December 1953, documents will be classified in accordance with the terms of the subject Executive Order.

2. The use of three classification categories is authorized under Executive Order 10501: Top Secret, Secret, and Confidential. The Restricted classification category is cancelled as of the effective date cited above. The subject Executive Order defines the three authorized classification categories as follows:


a. "Top Secret: Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Top Secret shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material which requires the highest degree of protection. The Top Secret classification shall be applied only to that information or material the defense aspect of which is paramount, and the unauthorized disclosure of which could result in exceptionally grave damage to the Nation such as leading to a definite break in diplomatic relations affecting the defense of the United States, an armed attack against the United States or its allies, a war, or the compromise of military or defense plans, or intelligence operations, or scientific or technological developments vital to the national defense."

b. "Secret: Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Secret shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material the unauthorized disclosure of which could result in serious damage to the Nation, such as by jeopardizing the international relations of the United States, endangering the effectiveness of a program or policy of vital importance to the national defense, or compromising important military or defense plans, scientific or technological developments important to the national defense, or information revealing important intelligence operations."

c. "Confidential: Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Confidential shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material the unauthorized disclosure of which could be prejudicial to the defense interests of the Nation."

3. Material which is currently classified Restricted will retain such classification unless it becomes necessary to release such material outside the Agency. Prior to its release, the material will be reviewed for the purpose of determining whether there should be an upgrading of its classification or complete declassification.

4. The use of the term "Security Information" with the classification categories has been cancelled by Executive Order 10501. It is therefore suggested that the words "Security Information" be removed from existing stamps wherever possible in order to keep the cost of new stamps at a minimum.

5. In accordance with Notice  Paragraphs 3 e (1) 25X1A through (3), the following delegations of authority are made:

a. The authority to classify original documents is delegated to Division and Staff Chiefs and their deputies, to Branch Chiefs and their deputies, and to members of the immediate Office of the Personnel Director. However, the originator of any document shares in this responsibility in his initial recommendation as to its proper classification.

b. The responsibility for the continuing review of classified material for the purpose of declassifying or downgrading is assigned to Division and Staff Chiefs and their deputies, to Branch Chiefs and their deputies, and to members of the immediate Office of the Personnel Director.

c. The responsibilities of Assistant Classification Control Officer are delegated to the Chief, Research Branch, Plans, Research and Development Staff. The Deputy Chief, Research Branch will serve as his alternate.

6. Division and Staff Chiefs will ensure that all employees become acquainted with the new system of document classification.

  
Acting Personnel Director

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